



## *Older Americans Act Information and Assistance Systems and Services*

The growth of the older adult population has increased the demand for information by both older persons and their caregivers. Today, older Americans face a complicated array of choices and decisions about a variety of issues, such as health care, housing, financial management, nutrition, and long term care. With so many overlapping federal and state programs and their different requirements, older adults and their caregivers often need help to know what services are available and whether they qualify.

The Older Americans Act Information and Assistance system helps older adults access social and health services across the country. This system has worked hard to establish and currently enjoys substantial credibility among older adults as a source of accurate and unbiased information and referral.

### ***What is Older Americans Act Information and Assistance?***

The primary purpose of the Information and Assistance system and its component national, state and local Information and Assistance systems and services is to support all older adults and their caregivers in:

- Assessing their needs;
- Identifying the most appropriate services to meet their needs, and;
- Linking the older persons and caregivers to agencies providing these services.

Information and assistance systems are the vital link between older persons who need services and those who can provide them.

### ***Components of the Older American Act Information and Assistance System***

State and Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers operate information and assistance programs. Established by the 1973 Amendments to the Older Americans Act, these systems inform, guide, and link older persons to available, appropriate, and acceptable services to meet their needs. There are more than 2500 information and assistance programs across the country. Information and assistance programs provide direct service to older persons and caregivers through nearly 14 million contacts annually.

These programs are key to connecting older persons and their caregivers with much needed information on services such as:

Adult day care	Community senior centers
Elderly nutrition services	Consumer protection
Elder abuse prevention	Energy assistance
Financial services	Health insurance counseling
Home health care	Home repair and modification
Homemaker/chore services	Housing options
Legal assistance	Pension Counseling
Respite services	Reverse Mortgages
SSI and Food Stamps	Transportation services

***The Eldercare Locator***

The Eldercare Locator, a national toll-free service established by the AoA, helps older persons and their caregivers find necessary, convenient services and resources in their own communities or throughout the country. The Eldercare Locator puts callers in touch with public and private organizations serving older adults. No matter where an individual lives, anyone can call the toll-free number, 1-800-677-1116, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Time.

***AoA Website***

The AoA website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals and organizations involved in aging programs. It also provides information about the AoA and the aging network and serves as an important link to the web sites maintained by the State and Area Agencies on Aging, as well as other resources related to aging programs and services.

***National Aging Information Center***

The National Aging Information Center maintains a bibliographic database about older adults that cites and abstracts over 4,000 aging-related materials. The database also includes research summaries, unpublished materials, software, and policy reports.

Working in close partnership with its sister agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the AoA is the official Federal agency dedicated to policy development, planning and the delivery of supportive home and community-based services to older persons and their caregivers. The AoA works through the national aging network of 56 State Units on Aging, 655 Area Agencies on Aging, 236 Tribal and Native organizations representing 300 American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal organizations, and two organizations serving Native Hawaiians, plus thousands of service providers, adult care centers, caregivers, and volunteers. For more information about the AoA, please contact:



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